

**1503**  
**Government Act**  
**encourages**  
**planting as first**  
**timber is imported**  
**into Scotland**

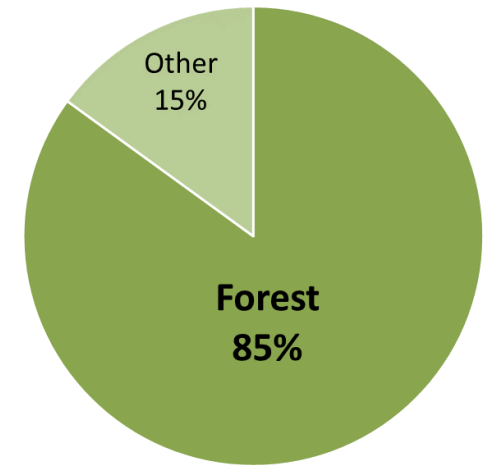
# **Ice Age – 1707**

**Tree cover expands naturally.**  
**Wood is fundamental to human development.**

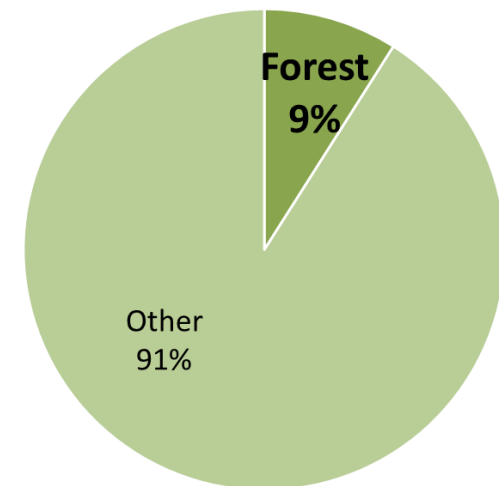
## THE WIDER PICTURE

- As the ice receded **native trees gradually re-colonised** the land.
- Early humans arrived and gradually evolved from hunter gatherers to farmers and craftsmen. **Woodland began to be cleared** for fuel wood, shelter, tools and farming.
- As bronze and iron smelting developed wood was also used as a source of **charcoal**. The development of **metal tools allowed wood to be carved and shaped**. Ships, carts, buildings, weapons and wooden barrels resulted. Wooden barrels became the best way to store and transport goods.
- **Coal mining** in Scotland started in 13<sup>th</sup> Century but wood and peat remained the main sources of fuel until the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Wood began to be used for **pit props** and in increasingly sophisticated **buildings, transport, ships and weaponry**.
- By **1503 timber imports had begun**, and the Scottish Government passed an Act to encourage **tree planting**.
- **In 1707 the Acts of Union** led to the creation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and control passed to the new parliament.

Tree Cover 5,000 years ago  
Mesolithic Stone Age



Tree Cover 500 years ago  
Scottish Renaissance



## LOCALLY

### WHO OWNED THE LAND TITLE?

**The feudal rights over the peoples and lands in Foyers and Stratherrick have changed hands many times over the centuries:**

- **11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> Centuries:** The Mormaers, or Lairds, of Moray whose family gave King MacBeth to Scotland were eventually subdued and power transferred to the Grants.
- **13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> Centuries:** The Grants influence and possessions gradually dwindled, and they eventually migrated to Glen Moriston and Strathspey. The lands were taken over by the Frasers due to marriage to a daughter of Patrick Le Grant.
- **15<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries:** The Frasers held power for many turbulent centuries. The first Fraser of Foyers was Hugh, an illegitimate son of the 8<sup>th</sup> Laird of Lovat who was given the estate of Upper Foyers by his father at the end of 15<sup>th</sup> Century. The land ownership did not change again until 1859.

**1723**

**Invention of  
steam engine  
leads to the  
Industrial  
Revolution**

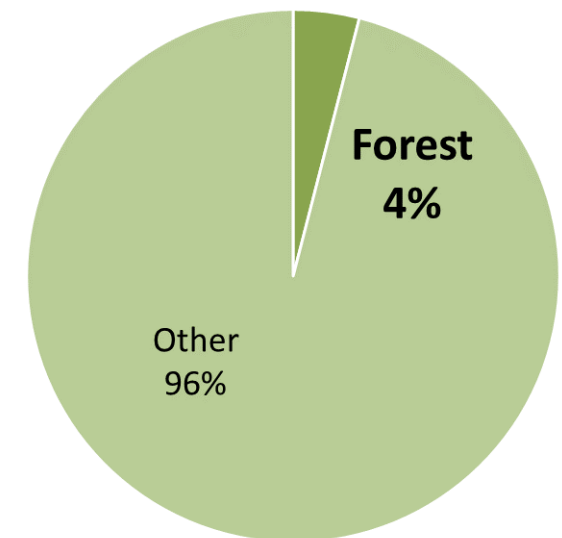
**1707 – 1900**

**Trees underpin development through the industrial revolution,  
in transport, trade and exploration as the Empire expands.**

## THE WIDER PICTURE

- The early part of this period in Scotland was marked by great unrest. As a result of the Jacobite uprisings a network of forts linked by military roads and bridges were built and a **military map of Scotland** was commissioned. **People and trees were cleared from the land** to make way for more profitable sheep and sport.
- The invention of the steam engine in 1712 led to rapid expansion in coal mining throughout the UK as the **industrial revolution** took hold. Timber was needed for pit props, canal building, railway sleepers and to support the textile industry. As trade and influence developed Britain needed large fleets of wooden trading vessels and warships.
- Explorers and scientists travelled widely. In 1826 **David Douglas**, a Scottish plant collector, visited North America. Among the many specimens he collected were **Sitka spruce and Douglas Fir** - very important commercial timber species in Scotland today.
- By the end of this period the mass production of **wood pulp for paper** has started. Concrete and steel were taking over from wood in construction and ship building and the **new technologies** like the internal combustion engine were in their infancy.

Tree Cover 250 years ago  
Industrial Revolution



## LOCALLY

**1726-32:** General Wade constructed a series of roads and bridges that improved access in Stratherrick, Strathnairn and the Great Glen.

**1747:** After Bonnie Prince Charlie fled down Strathnairn and Stratherrick following his defeat at the Battle of Culloden a military map of Scotland was commissioned. **William Roy** spent the next 8 years at Fort Augustus; it was largely due to him that the Ordnance Survey was founded in 1791. **The Roy maps are used today by foresters and conservationists to identify areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland.**

**1787:** Robert Burns visited the area and wrote his poem “The Falls of Foyers”.

**1822:** Thomas Telford opened the **Caledonian Canal** which linked east and west Scotland. It may have been too late to aid ships during the Napoleonic Wars, but it proved very useful for local transport, including timber.

**1855:** The railway reached Inverness

**1897:** Sika deer were introduced to Aldourie Estate

## CHANGES TO THE LAND TITLE

**1707 -1859:** The land remained in the ownership of the Frasers until the Foyers estate was sold in 1859. **The rings on the Norway Spruce tree show it was 1 year old in 1780 when the Frasers still owned all the land.**

**1859 – 71:** Mr Fountain Walker, an Edinburgh business man, who purchased the Foyers estate, enlarged and improved the Foyers Mains farm by building the farm steading. "

**1871 – 95:** Mr John Charles Cunningham from Craighends, Lanarkshire, purchased the land and used it mainly for sport - grouse shooting, deer stalking and fishing. In 1894 he put Lower Foyers and Upper Foyers up for sale by public auction: -

*"On Monday 9<sup>th</sup> July 1894 at 2 o'clock precisely, unless previously sold by private bargain at the Mart, Tokenhouse Yard, Bank of England".*

*"Entry to the subject sold shall be at the term of Whitsunday 1895".*

**1895:** Lower Foyers, covering Gorthleck and Wester Aberchalder, was sold to British Aluminium and the first Foyers Factory open in 1896 and a new era in the life began in Foyers. The last link with the past was severed when Foyers Mansion House, the home of the Frasers of Foyers who had controlled the destinies of its people for so many centuries was demolished. Upper Foyers, which included Meallagy, Compass, Garrogie with its shooting lodge and Glenmarkie was retained by the Cunningham family and bought by T.H. Summerson in 1956.

## Extracts from the Sales Particulars for Lower and Upper Foyers Estates in 1894-5

### **Particulars as listed in the sale of:**

- 1) Lower Foyers, Gothleck and Aberchalder
- 2) Upper Foyers including Meallagy, Compass and Garrogy

Belonging to JOHN CHARLES CUNNINGHAM.

**Lower Foyers and Gorthlick** embrace about 5,579 acres of which 776 are Arable, about 2339 are Wood, the remainder being Pasture, Moorland, Roads etc.

**Wester Aberchalder** extends to about 2,150 acres of which 116 are Arable, 198 Fine Meadow Land, 7 Planted Wood, and the remainder Natural Wood, Pasture, Moorland, etc.

The total superficial area of the combined estates is thus 7,729 acres.

**THE PLANTED WOODS** consist of about 1,304 Acres of very thriving and valuable Plantations of Scotch Fir and Larch judiciously laid out in variable, suitable parts of the Estate, and tending greatly to improve the amenity and enhance the value of the Property. The remaining Woods are of natural growth consisting of Birch, Oak, Beech, Ash, Plane etc, A considerable portion of the Planted Wood is now of an age to bear periodical thinning, and a yearly return has for some time been obtained therefrom by the sale of prop-wood, fencing posts, etc. The return will increase year by year. From the Natural Timber an annual income has been derived for many years. There is some **VERY VALUABLE OLD TIMBER** on Gorthlick and in the Grounds around the old house of Foyers overlooking Loch Ness. Near the latter, too, there is a Pinetum comprising nearly all the know varieties of conifers. For estate purposes such as Repairs, Erection of New Buildings, and of Fences, Home Timber, easily carried and of suitable kinds, has always been found most useful. The Planted Woods, which are of various ages, have lately been valued by a thoroughly competent authority at £14,380, and the Natural Woods at £4,168 making together £18,548.

### **Upper Foyers (including Meallagy, Compass and Garrogy) and Glenmarkie**

Together about 12,509 acres in extent, 200 being old arable land (now in Grass), and the remainder being Pasture, Moorland, Natural Wood, Road, etc.

***Also mentioned:** At Gorthlick situated close to the high road leading through Stratherrick, is still to be seen, the first house in which PRINCE CHARLIE took refuge after his flight from Culloden, and from out of one of the windows of which his escape was effected.*





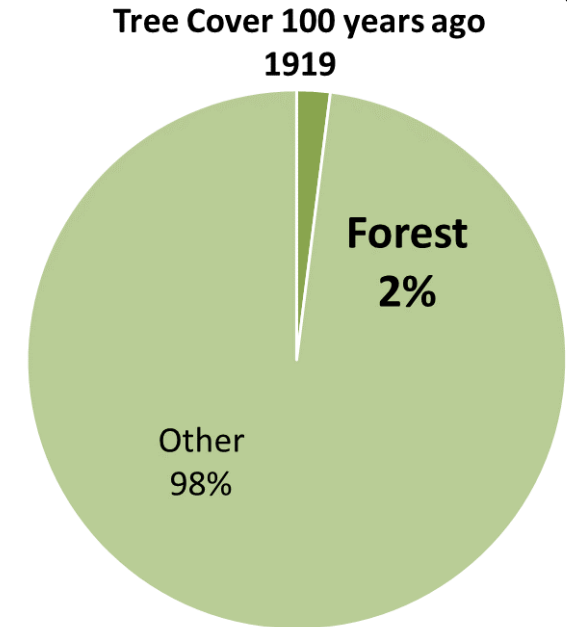
**1914-18  
FIRST  
WORLD  
WAR**

**1900-1920**

**National forest reserves depleted by extensive felling during the First World War. The Forestry Commission is formed.**

## THE WIDER PICTURE

- **1914-18: The First World War** resulted in widespread felling throughout Britain to support the war effort. Timber was needed directly in trench warfare and indirectly as pit props to support the mining of coal for armament production. Woodland cover in UK was at an all-time low.
- **1918:** The **Ackland Committee** had been looking at the best ways of developing woodland resources. They **recommended a state organisation** as being the most effective way of co-ordinating a re-forestation plan to meet timber needs in the foreseeable future and to provide much needed employment.
- **1919:** On 1<sup>st</sup> Sept - **The Forestry Act** came into force. This set up the **Forestry Commission** and gave it responsibility for woods in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. Eight forestry Commissioners were charged with promoting forestry, developing afforestation, the production of timber and making grants to private landowners. They met for the first time in Nov under chairman **Lord Lovat**.



## **LOCALLY**

The first trees planted by the Forestry Commission in 1919 in the Loch Ness area were at Port Clair near Ft Augustus.

Private Estates in the Straths would grow, saw and use their own timber for construction, fencing etc. Many estates had their own sawmills and tree nurseries.

The railway from Invergarry to Ft Augustus was opened on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1903

## ***LOCAL PEOPLE***

**JAMES CAMERON** (1855-1921) worked on Dunmaglass Estate as a forester and master joiner.

**JOHN REID** Piermaster at Inverfarigaig had a shop, post office and store for coal which was supplied to customers in bags. Some people today remember the remains of a railway line near the pier and wood from the sawmill close by would be loaded, drawn along the line by a horse and then transferred to the boat. At Inverfarigaig there was also a weighbridge, but it is no longer visible since the road was tarred over.

*Photograph taken in 1904 of John Reid at Inverfarigagig Pier*

## **EXACTLY 100 YEARS AGO**

**16<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1919:** Lord Lovat sells Estates of Glendoe, Corrigarth, Stronelairg and Killin

**About 50,378 acres in total**

**FOR SALE BY AUCTION**

at the Estate Sale Room, 20 Hanover Square London W1 on  
Monday, 16<sup>th</sup> day of June 1919 at 2.30 o'clock precisely,  
unless previously sold privately.

*For more details please refer to the Extract of Sales particulars for the  
Estates of Glendoe, Corrigarth, Stonelairg and Killin.*

**Extracts from the Particulars as listed in the sale of estates of**

**Glendoe, Corrigarth, Stonelairg and Killin.**

belonging to the RIGHT HONOURABLE LORD LOVAT

**Glendoe:** 20,020 Acres. There is a plantation of forty years old of Scots Fir and a few Larch extending to an area of about 50 Acres and a large area of Birch, for which there is good demand for timber and birch twigs.

These woods have been valued at £3,000.

**Corrigarth:** 11,650 acres. There is an area of about 500 Acres of Birch Wood, for which there is a good demand as well as for the Birch twigs.

These woods have been valued at £5,000

**Stronelairg:** 16,729 acres. There is a large thriving plantation of Scots Fir about 40 Acres near the lodge, and on the estate about 200 Acres of natural Birch Wood.

**Killin:** 1,979 acres. It is sheltered by a plantation of Scots fir, about 45 years old. Woodlands – there is a Fir plantation 45 years old extending to about 20 acres.

**All growing timber and underwood belonging to the seller is included in the sale.**

**Also mentioned:** *As to Romance, the name of Prince Charlie is forever associated with it; the Pass of Corriearrick was travelled by the Highland host on it's victorious march to the south, while it was by a road which runs through the estates that the Prince fled from the fatal field of Culloden.*

**1929**

**Wall Street Crash**

**1936**

**1<sup>st</sup> Fergies arrive  
in UK**

# **1920-1940**

**Forestry expansion gets underway as the new strategic reserve is created.**

**The Forestry Commission starts acquiring and planting land.**

## **THE WIDER PICTURE:**

**The bedrock of forestry policy in the 1920's was the need to re-build and maintain a STRATEGIC TIMBER RESERVE.**

- Stocks were so depleted by the First World War – especially trench warfare – that the new Commission was given a good deal of freedom to acquire and plant land.
- At this time foresters and workers were housed in estate buildings.
- By 1934 The Forestry Commission's estates had continued to increase, reaching 909,000 acres. Of these 316,000 were under plantation.
- The main market for timber was as pit props, with fast developing heavy industries almost completely dependant on coal. This emphasis was maintained throughout the 1940s.

**By 1939 the number of people employed in forestry was 14,000.**

## LOCALLY

A Bobbin Mill existed at Inverfarigaig. Little trace of it now remains. J C Cunningham, landowner, (at the time of his selling in 1894) charged John Cameron £50 in rent for pier, land, houses at Inverfarigaig; D.W Gillies £6 annual rent for a house, £34 for the Bobbin Mill itself and Andrew Johnstone, a forester, £10 for his house and land at Inverfarigaig. The mill had been established in the Victorian period. It had used locally sourced birch to produce bobbins for the thread mill of Clark & Co, Paisley, who much later (1952) amalgamated with J & P Coats. Evidence of a dam for the water supply to the mill is still in existence at Ault-na-Goire. The British Aluminium continued to work the sawmill at the Bobbin Mill at Inverfarigaig until 1926 when it burned down.

The busy life continued at the pier. The “Gondolier” and the “Glengarry” would take passengers to Inverness. The captain eventually retired to Ft Augustus but took up a job as a diver, inspecting the locks on the Caledonian Canal, equipped with a diving suit, diving boots and a helmet.



## ***LOCAL PEOPLE***

**WILLIAM MACINTYRE:** came to Foyers in 1936 and was employed as an assistant forester to Mr Anderson (forester in charge of British Aluminium forestry operations). He went on to marry John Reid's daughter Minnie.

**ISOBEL ALLAN:** whose grandfather was Captain of the Gondolier, remembers the Bobbin Mill building and the slipway as a child and the boat continuing to take passengers as there were no buses.

**DAVID SMITH:** recalls his father Jimmy Smith telling him of how he, and some others would cycle from Foyers to the Knockie Pier, crossing over to Port Clair to plant trees. Jimmy also worked many years in the Foyers factory.

**GRACE MacLEOD:** tells of her father, Ali Mackenzie, who lived with his two brothers and parents at a house in Glenlia. His father died when he was only 5 or 6 years old. After attending Foyers School, he got a job working in the sawmill at Inverfarigaig. The family were then told that as the house belonged to British Aluminium if he didn't leave his job at the sawmill and work at the factory, they would be put out of the house. Consequently, he changed his job, and this also meant a considerable drop in wages. When Grace's parents married, they settled in Island Cottage, her father continued to work in the factory until 1950. Fresh wood from the sawmill was used for repairs to the cottage. Grace adds that they were plagued by woodworm that constantly needed treatment.

**1939-45  
Second  
World War  
1948  
NHS starts**

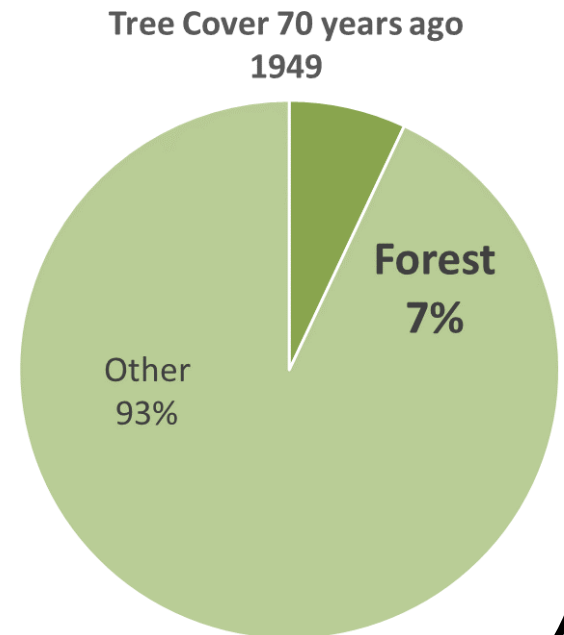
# **1940-1950**

**The Second World War and its aftermath. Forestry starts to become mechanised with tractors replacing horses.**

## THE WIDER PICTURE:

- Around 90% of the timber used in the war effort came from private estates. Heavy felling resulted in almost all the remaining woods planted in the golden age between 1750 and 1850 being cut and even some parts of the old Caledonian Forest that had been spared during the First World War came under the axe.
- During the war Commission forests produced more than 51 million cubic feet of wood.
- Pit props were supplied to mines that produced the coal on which so many armaments and other industries depended. Large numbers of Canadians and New Zealanders were drafted in for this essential work.
- It wasn't all felling, **over 100,000 acres were planted during the war years** and 133,000 acres were acquired for forestry.
- The 40's saw the beginning of the expansion of the Forestry Commission's research looking into species, form, yield, silviculture and technology to maximise production.

**By 1941 the number of people employed in forestry was now 44,300**, including several thousands of “**Lumberjills**” from the Women's Timber Corps.



## LOCALLY

**In 1945**, the first trees planted by the Forestry Commission on this side of the Loch were on ground at Erchite bought from Aldourie Estates.

**In 1945, Farr Estate** (with the exception of the policy woodlands) was also acquired from Lt Col W.A.D. MacKenzie.

**1949:** Forestry Commission built houses at Hillhead (Inverfarigaig) Farr & Lynebeg (Moy).

## ***LOCAL PEOPLE***

**IAN MACASKILL:** remembers Alister Chisholm's grandfather (Alex) and father loading wood from Whitebridge hill in 1943. From there the wood was driven to Ft Augustus where it was transferred by rail to be used as pit props. Alister also hauled gravel, sawdust and timber on the Newfoundlanders' Camp at Whitebridge (9th August 1944 - 14th November 1945) most days. The railway from Invergarry to Ft Augustus closed to passengers in 1933 but stayed open for goods and livestock to 1946.

**ALISTAIR MACKINTOSH:** can recall the sawmill at Mill Cottage, Dores which had a very tall chimney stack. During the war the German Luftwaffe had Foyers as a target and this chimney stack gave them an indication where they were. He remembers the stack was knocked down when he started school at Aldourie. Remains of the pier where the wood was loaded from the sawmill can still be seen today.

**WILLIAM MACINTYRE:** having gone to war returned to Inverfarigaig in 1945 and in 1947/8 took over as forester of the British Aluminium plantations and nursery etc.

**1959**  
**First**  
**electricity in**  
**Foyers.**

**1950-1960**

**Continued FC planting, increased production,  
Dedication schemes start for private woodlands.**

## THE WIDER PICTURE:

- **By 1951 The Forestry Commission employed 13,220 people in total.**
  - Income exceeded £1,000,000.
  - Planting averaged 24,500 acres per year.
  - 40,000 acres of broadleaves were also established.
  - Sales of timber rose from less than £500,000 to well over £2 million per year.
- Use of diesel-powered tractors and ploughs became increasingly common after the war and one-man operated chainsaw also started to become available.
- By the end of the decade private landowners were finally warming to the new Dedication Schemes and nearly 600,000 acres of private woodlands were under dedicated management plans receiving grant aid and tax concessions.
- Forest research was developing many new techniques including aerial spraying, tried for the first time in 1954 in a battle against the Pine Looper moth.

## **LOCALLY**

Sawmills in Stratherrick and Foyers could be seen at Drummond, Whitebridge, Loch Bran, Errogie, Foyers Factory, Tor Duncan, Erchite and Inverfarigaig.

The mills at Whitebridge, Loch Bran and Tor Duncan also had workers camps. These included family huts and the children boosted the local school rolls considerably.

## ***LOCAL PEOPLE***

**ALISTAIR MACKINTOSH**, farmer, can recall the sawmill at Drummond and the men, employed by a firm Wallace working for Col Cameron. They were very hard workers and when finished in the area they returned to about Banchory. Another firm took over from Wallace and he remembers the huge stacks of wood. He recalls, just after the war when the Forestry Commission were planting areas of land locally, Willie MacQueen (or Willie Balloan as he was known) advised his father to plough what he could in order that the ground could not be put under trees. Alistair had to get the wee Fergie tractor out, the ground was steep but the order was to “GET PLOUGHING”.



## ***LOCAL PEOPLE***

**ELIZABETH HOWARD**, daughter of William and Minnie MacIntyre and granddaughter to John Reid, tells of a Forestry Commission camp where the B852 crosses the Allt Saidh burn. The 14-15 men had their own cook whom they paid from their wages and went to Ballachcladich for milk. Most of them were “Glasgow boys” who had returned home from the war and found themselves unemployed. The labour exchange also sent other men to work in the woods, arriving on the 12o’clock bus and only able to return on the 5o’clock bus.

Some wooden panels from this camp were set up in Inverfarigaig to provide a small hall there, where many FC workers, their families and local residents could meet for activities such as whist and a party at Christmastime enjoyed by all the children.

The foresters house at Farigaig, Druim-nan-Alt, like many others built by the Forestry Commission had a separate room used as an office. When Jack Riddle became forester, he decided the office should be moved to a shed at the house gate.

On 5.5.55 Elizabeth remembers starting work in the forest office when there were 32 in the squad. The keeper was Dodd Watt later followed by Jimmy Warden and Hamish MacDonald was the trapper. The Sime brothers had the contract for the sawmill at Tor Duncan at that time and the lorries were all still loaded by hand.

In 1959: The first electricity came to Foyers!

## ***LOCAL PEOPLE***

**JOHNNY MURRAY** left Foyers School in 1956 and started work with the Forestry Commission at the age of 15. He remembers working in the nursery at the foot of the Corkscrew opposite Hillhead. Donny MacLeod was the Head Forester. Young trees consisted of Alder, Beech, Lodgepole Pine, Larch and Sitka spruce. In March or early spring, the task was to put the trees into bundles of 100 and bundles of 50 for Sitka. Alongside him worked Malcolm Lyle an ex-Spitfire pilot officer in the RAF who had been shell shocked after being shot down numerous times during the war. He also worked with his school pal Alfie Fraser under Charlie MacDougall clearing way birch, larch and fir for the hydro-poles coming in using a crosscut saw and an axe.

Wood cut by the Newfoundlanders at Loch Bran went to make gliders and some parts of light aircraft like the Mosquito. Wood from Foyers went to Fife for pit props and Ronnie Lyndsay drove the lorry taking pine thinnings to Culloden sawmill. The tall thin trees on either side going down to the medical centre at Foyers, on the Uchka Hill and round beside Donald Forbes ground were referred to as “pokers”. If the furnace at the factory became overheated a light would come on warning that the aluminium was overheating, the pokers were then pushed in to lower the temperature. The remains of the pokers and other backs of logs went as firewood locally. This was delivered for 4 or 5shillings per load in a rota by Jock Kennedy.

Both Alfie and Johnny left the Forestry Commission. Johnny was attracted by higher wages at the Foyers aluminium factory and Alfie trained as a welder in Inverness. In those days the nearest forestry training school was in Strathyre and was too far from home. Johnny also remembers working for Jimmy Scott who lived at Craig-an-Eich and his ganger Bill Hunter who hailed from Peebles.

**1969**

**1<sup>st</sup> man lands  
on the moon.  
Britain joins  
the EEC.**

# **1960-1970**

**Major forestry expansion with fast growing commercial,  
non-native species. Major mechanisation aids production.**

## THE WIDER PICTURE:

- A mechanical revolution took place. The axe and crosscut disappeared, replaced by the **light-weight chainsaw**. Stables became workshops as the use of horses declined.
- Coal mining now used only  $\frac{1}{3}$ <sup>rd</sup> of the Commission's output, but growth in forestry and its related industries still created thousands of new jobs. With a guaranteed timber supply massive investment took place in the timber using industries and new markets opened up.
- The private sector was buoyant too; by 1969 it was carrying out 40% of total planting and close to 1,000,000 acres had been dedicated. Under the **Forestry Act 1967**, it became illegal to fell trees in UK without a licence.
- With the passing of **The Countryside Act 1968** the Forestry Commission was required to "have regard to the desirability of conserving the natural beauty and amenity of the countryside. As awareness of public access and recreation grew, along with landscape and conservation considerations **Dame Sylvia Crowe** was appointed as the first FC landscape consultant and the public were given a **right to roam** in Commission forests.

## LOCALLY:

In November 1966, The Forestry Commission bought **Knockie Estate** the most westerly point of Farigaig Forest. Planting began in 1968.

In 1967 the Foyers aluminium factory closed.

Wiggins Teape & Co Ltd's **Fort William pulp and paper mill** project was the culmination of a number of years of planning by the firm and the Forestry Commission in the 60's. Pulpwood was taken from a radius of 100miles and by 1965 it was producing 80,000 tons of bleached pulp. In 1968 a second paper making line was introduced.

In 1969 the stable at Inverfarigaig was turned into an information and wildlife exhibition centre as part of the Forestry Commission Jubilee celebrations along with the Forest Walk.

## ***LOCAL PEOPLE***

**ELIZABETH HOWARD** remembers the new bridge built at Inverfarigaig which cut through the nursery where Johnny Murray worked and by-passed the old Wade's bridge which can be seen today. Another nursery also existed on the other side of the bridge at Fasnagruig.

**EOIN FRASER:** Eoin Fraser, a pupil at Aldourie School in June 1969, went on a school trip as part of the Forestry Commission's Jubilee celebrations. This included seeing the Douglas Fir plantation, one of which is used for the tree ring demonstration which was then only four years old!

**1971  
Decimalisation  
and the  
1<sup>st</sup> email  
is sent**

# **1970-1980**

**Landscape, conservation and public access rise in priority.  
Research and training underpin further development.**



## THE WIDER PICTURE

- Following the advice of Dame Sylvia Crowe, landscaping began to be considered on a far wider scale. The geometric shapes and larch boundaries seen in earlier plantings were avoided and this resulted in new, well designed woods which were aesthetically pleasing as well as productive.
- Forests were identified as important wildlife reserves, and conservation started to be given a much higher priority than before.
- The Northern Research Station (NRS) in Midlothian was opened in 1970.
- A Forest Cabins branch was formed to provide forest holiday accommodation.
- Education and training provision; research and work study were re-organised and focused on new methods and machinery.

**In 1979: The Commission sold 1.4 million m<sup>3</sup> of timber earning £34million.**

## LOCALLY

Foyers Hydroelectric scheme started in the old factory building.

Felling in Inverfarigaig was undertaken by squads with chainsaws using new, ergonomic methods. Timber was increasingly extracted using skidders. Hydraulic cranes meant loading onto lorries was no longer undertaken by hand. Timber mainly went for sawmilling or as pulp and pallet wood.

The **Fort William pulp mill reached its peak** in the 1970s employing over 900 people and providing thousands of forestry jobs across western Scotland.

**1987**

**Many pits close  
as the National  
Coal Board is  
privatised.**

**1980-1990**

**Years of change and challenge.**

## THE WIDER PICTURE:

- By the early 80's **recession** hit timber users and the **pulp mill at Fort William closed**. As the UK started to buy in cheaper imported coal, steel and timber many **pits closed** and the demand for pit props ended. The Commission began to develop export markets and soon 500,000 tonnes of timber per year were being exported – much to Scandinavia.
- The 1980s saw severe Government cutbacks. New planting was cut and investment in recreation ceased. Messages from the Government were mixed: On one hand expressing support, on the other restricting forestry operations and pushing for **privatisation**. The **Forestry Act 1981** allowed the sale of Commission land and resulted in a programme of **woodland sales**. **Discounts to buy forestry houses** also started during this decade.
- The Forestry Commission was receiving heavy **criticism** for a lack of environmental awareness and began to improve communication and engagement.
- The Commission management structure changed from 4 to 3 tiers with the merger of forests and districts into Forest-Districts in 1984.
- Specialised forestry tractors (Forwarders) revolutionised extraction to roadside during the 80s.

**By 1989: Production had risen to 3.5 million m<sup>3</sup> worth over £77million.**

## **LOCALLY**

The pulp mill closed in 1980 but demand for timber was maintained through sawmilling. In the 1980s harvesters for clear-felling and thinning gradually started to replace the felling squads. Fewer and fewer people were directly employed by the Commission as more work was put out to contract.

The local forestry houses gradually become privately owned.

In 1984 Highlands and Islands Enterprise establish a new board mill at Dalcross. Highland Forest Products Ltd manufactured orientated strand board OSB from locally produced Scots pine. The mill was purchased by Norbord in 1988.

Strong storms in 1987 resulted in widespread wind blow. However, the vast majority of blown timber was salvaged and marketed.

## ***LOCAL PEOPLE***

**JANE HOWARD:** Daughter of Elizabeth writes in the Foyers School Magazine 1981 that there were now only 16 people working for the Forestry Commission in Inverfarigaig. The main jobs were felling, tractor driving and clerical.

**1999**  
**The Scottish**  
**Parliament**  
**convenes for 1<sup>st</sup>**  
**time since 1707**

# **1990-2000**

**Further mechanisation and multiple use forestry.**

**Re-organisation and Scottish devolution.**

## THE WIDER PICTURE

- By the 1990s the Forestry Commission was committed to multi-purpose forestry. Specialist harvesters had largely replaced felling squads.
- A major re-organisation in the early 1990s split the functions apart so that the Forestry Commission continued with conservancies covering the role of the Forest Authority leaving the newly created Forest Enterprise to manage the directly owned forest estate.
- The demands of commercial production, recreation and conservation were carefully balanced and not only in Forest Enterprise woods; Centre of Excellence awards for private owners encouraged multi-purpose management, and the Woodland Grant Scheme offered bigger grants if public access was a key objective.
- After new demands for privatisation were made in 1994 a Forestry Review Group was set up and as a result the government decided that "Forestry Commission woodlands will remain in the public sector"

**In 1999 the devolution of the Scottish Parliament led to the creation of Forestry Commission Scotland, a sub-department of the Forestry Commission of GB.**

## **LOCALLY**

Major felling by Forest Enterprise started in **Knockie** during this time. The work was planned, publicly consulted and agreed with the Forestry Commission before the work was undertaken by private forestry contractors.

The Norbord factory at Dalcross expanded in 1994.



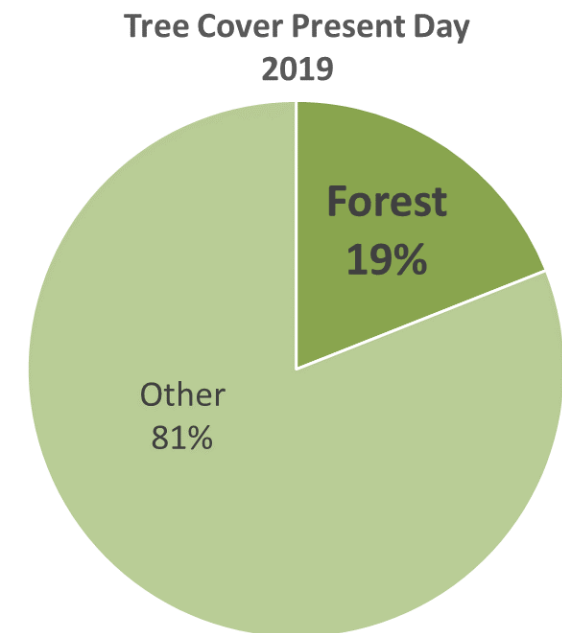
**2019**  
**Forestry fully**  
**devolved to**  
**Scotland**

**2000-2019**

**Re-structuring mature forests, further devolution.**  
**Adapting to and combatting climate change.**

## THE WIDER PICTURE

- Forests are increasingly seen as an environmental resource and managed for balanced **multiple use**; post war forests are being carefully **re-structured** as they reach maturity to break up the age structure and introduce diversity. Private woodlands and Forest Enterprise produce Long Term Forest Plans which involve **wide ranging public consultations**. Grants for **planting native trees** also came to the fore at this time.
- In 2005 The **Land Reform** (Scotland) Act came into force. Everyone has '**freedom to roam**' throughout Scotland, not just on FC land.
- Forest Enterprise now employ **education and recreation rangers** to meet visitors' particular needs and help to make the forests **accessible to everyone**.
- Forestry Commission working with private woodland owners have arrested the wholesale decline of woodland and begun to reverse it. Ensuring the future role of forests in **surviving and combatting climate change** will now become the next important challenge.



**On 1 April 2019 Forestry became fully devolved. Two new bodies – Forestry and Land Scotland and Scottish Forestry were established to take over the Forestry Commission's responsibilities in Scotland.**

## **LOCALLY:**

In 2003 School and Milton Woods in Farr were purchased from the Forestry Commission by the community and are now managed as continuous cover native woodlands which provide recreation, conservation and produce timber.

The main felling programme at Knockie gets underway using contractors.

29<sup>th</sup> June 2009 Glendoe dam opened.

By 2018 major investment and expansion takes place again at Norbord, Dalcross. In order to meet demand for their products this is also accompanied by major imports of Scandinavian birch through Inverness harbour.